



Quick Reference Guide: Classroom Level Meaningful and Rigorous Learning Opportunities That Build on English Learners' Assets

Encourage English Learner Participation in Rigorous Courses

Educators encourage ELs at all English proficiency levels to participate in rigorous, grade-appropriate courses that build on their cultural and linguistic assets. ELs should have equal opportunity to meaningfully participate in all programs and activities, including advanced courses such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, early college, and dual enrollment courses.

Educators of ELs (guidance counselors, content area, bilingual, ESL, etc.) all play an important role in encouraging, supporting, and advocating for ELs to participate meaningfully in a variety of school programs and activities. They can support EL participation in rigorous coursework by:

- Advising ELs during the course scheduling process to ensure it capitalizes on their skills, knowledge, experiences, and readiness, and that it is connected to personal goals and interests
- Supporting ELs in making informed course selections across the range of program ([Advanced Placement](#), [International Baccalaureate](#), [Chapter 74](#) vocational and technical programs, [innovation pathways](#), [early college](#), [gifted and talented](#) programs, etc.)
- Providing expertise in [screening and placement procedures](#) to ensure equitable access to ELs given individual language proficiency levels and multilingual capabilities
- Documenting the performance of ELs as data to justify and inform participation in a variety of advanced coursework options

Rich educational opportunities, such as advanced course work, capitalize on the linguistic and cultural assets ELs bring to the classroom while further preparing ELs for and building the knowledge and skills necessary for continued success into college and career.

Collaborative Scheduling Maximizes ESL and Core Content Instruction

Educators collaborate with school administrators to create and adhere to ELs' schedules that ensure no disruption to core content instruction or ESL, two mandated instructional components in ELE programs.

ELs schedules are complex because of the overlapping programs, services, and supports often needed to leverage their assets and meet their varied needs. To ensure ELs have meaningful access to rigorous learning educators collaborate closely with grade level teams, guidance staff, families, and administration to:

- Share information about each EL's progress, content knowledge and skill development, language development in relation to [benchmarks](#), and other scheduling needs
- Analyze student work samples, assessments, observations, and other sources of evidence that support scheduling teams in making informed decisions
- Make recommendations for EL schedules
- Ensure each EL's [schedule addresses both the ESL and content instruction components](#) of the English Language Education (ELE) program offered at the school
- Make recommendations for program (ELE, academic, etc.) improvement focused on ensuring ELs have access to rigorous grade-level standards and develop language proficiency

Collaboration between educators leverages expertise from those who have expertise in working with ELs and who best understand their performance for scheduling processes.

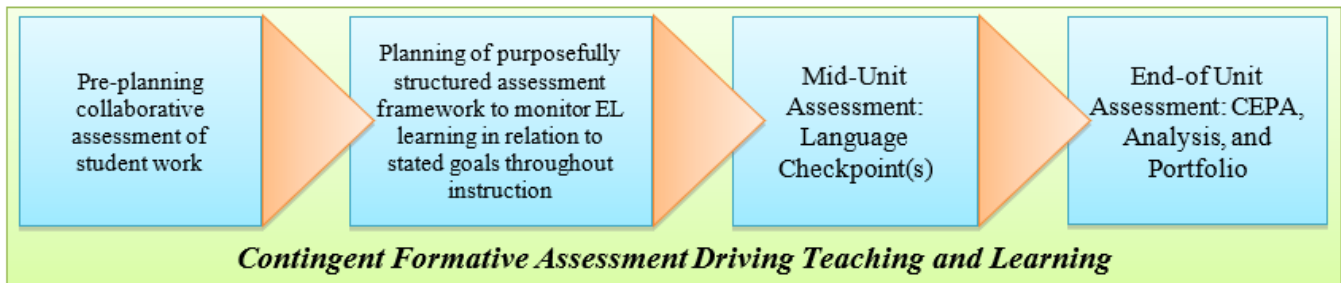
Multiple Sources of Evidence to Support EL Scheduling

1. EL achievement on performance assessments in content classes
2. Language growth on annual ACCESS for ELLs assessment
3. Student work showing language development
4. Teacher input based on bilingual student work showing attainment of standards in the MA frameworks in either language
5. Performance on MCAS assessment
6. Curricular differentiation for ELP levels in courses being considered.

Leverage Assessment to Support Rigorous Experiences

Educators use appropriate formative and summative assessments to provide rigorous learning experiences to ELs that accelerate their progress toward mastery of content standards and English language proficiency.

Using multiple measures of ELs' academic growth and language development is essential for programmatic decisions such as scheduling and to support effective rigorous instruction. Several assessment processes can be used to gauge EL progress towards desired outcomes, inform rigorous learning for EL, and plan next instructional steps. [Formative assessment](#) is an active process where educators gather evidence of ELs learning and comprehension to plan instruction [contingently and fluidly](#). It supports in-the-moment responsive approaches to EL teaching that allow educators to adjust instruction as needed. It can also be used to support long-term decisions for curricular, assessment, placement and program improvement decisions. Educators also use summative, diagnostic, interim, and other assessments to gather multiple measures of EL achievement over time. Summative assessments such as Access for ELLs and MCAS play an important role in informing EL curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Unit level summative assessments can inform instructional next steps for a student. Standardized test scores provide insight about an EL's progress and can be used to plan responsive instruction to accelerate progress toward mastery of content standards and English language proficiency.



Adapted from Figure 6: Overview of Assessment in Next Generation ESL MCUs

Effective educators of ELs also provide ELs with feedback from assessments and promote self-directed learning. To maximize the effectiveness of assessments and feedback loops, educators work together to develop and monitor assessments across content areas and grade levels. They ensure alignment to stated goals and that assessments are fair, reliable, and are generating valuable evidence of EL learning. Educator teams also collaborate to calibrate their use of assessments and feedback sharing to ensure systemic expectations.



To effectively plan for EL assessments, educators of ELs:

- Start with clear language and content learning targets outlining desired outcomes for EL learning
- Design evaluative criteria for assessments from learning targets
- Develop different levels of assessments (formative, lesson-level and unit level, interim, summative) directly from learning targets and evaluative criteria (to measure language and content [fairly](#)).



To support ELs through the process of assessment, educators of ELs help them become self-directed learners by:

- Sharing learning expectations for self-monitoring of learning in relation to the identified standards
- Coaching ELs to become more autonomous in identifying areas for improvement and choosing learning opportunities in these areas
- Providing timely [feedback](#) related to established expectations

Actions-at-a-Glance : Meaningful and Rigorous Instruction

Meaningful and Rigorous Instruction: What can educators at the classroom level do?

- Help ELs to select a course schedule with rigorous learning opportunities and appropriate supports
- Actively involve and honor ELs' voice in course selection decision-making (selecting advanced courses such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Gifted and Talented, early college, Vocational Technical)
- Advocate for the creation of schedules that provide for common planning time for educators of ELs to collaborate meaningfully around EL performance and progress, and curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Involve EL parents (through [ELPACs](#) or other groups) in discussing master schedules
- Include authentic performance-based assessments into units of instruction to determine ELs' ability to transfer knowledge and skills to new contexts
- Use formative and summative assessment and [feedback](#) connected to expectations to help ELs monitor progress, identify areas for improvement, and focus on those to develop language and master content standards
- Use [contingent pedagogy](#) to monitor student learning and inform instruction

Planning Resources

DESE Practical Tools and Resources

[The Board of Education Advisory Councils Gifted and Talented Education Advisory Council](#) provides a variety of resources for gifted and talented education including links to the annual report which includes recommendations around identification and motivation of gifted students.

[College and Career Readiness](#) helps educators keep an eye on college and career readiness including the academic habits of mind students need to cultivate and information on innovations pathways and chapter 74 programs.

[English Proficiency Benchmarks](#) provides information about expectations and how to use of benchmarks for promoting EL progress toward attaining English proficiency.

[ESL Stories from the Field: Promoting Inclusive Practice for all Students](#) showcases collaboration practices from the field to promote inclusive practice.

DESE Guidance

[Next Generation ESL Curriculum Project: ESL Curriculum Resource Guide](#) provides tools and guidance for effective EL assessment, including an assessment framework (p. 88-101), guidance for providing effective feedback (p. 95). It also provides a definition of ESL instruction (p. 17-19).

[Guidance for Sheltered English Immersion \(SEI\) Programs](#) provides scenarios with useful information and examples for scheduling ELs (see Appendix F: Scenarios).

[ELE Tiered Focused Monitoring System](#) provides a list of policies and procedures districts are expected to have regarding initial identification of ELs.

[Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Language Learners](#) provides resources that can be used to become knowledgeable about key EL policies and procedures.

[English Learners and ELs with Disabilities](#) provides resources planning responsive curriculum, instruction, assessment, and supports for ELs with disabilities, including guides on identification, IEP planning and development, and effective programs.

[Massachusetts Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education \(SLIFE\) Definition and Guidance](#) provides information that can support planning instruction and scheduling for SLIFE.

[ESL Model Curriculum Units](#) provide exemplar units that showcase meaningful rigorous learning experiences for ELs.

[Guidance for English Learner Parent Advisory Councils](#) provides suggestions and strategies to promote effective EL family engagement and involvement.

Federal Resources

[English Learner Tool Kit](#) provides information about effective instruction and programming for ELs. Chapter 4 provides tools and resource for ensuring equal access to all educational opportunities.

[Exploratory Study on the Identification of English Learners for Gifted and Talented Programs](#) provides recommendations and key points to consider for ensuring ELs have equitable access to gifted and talented programs.

[Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program](#) provides information on the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talents Students Education grant program, which is aimed at enhancing schools' abilities to develop and strengthen Gifted and Talented programs and ensuring equitable access for ELs.

Other Featured Resources

[State and Federal Policy: Gifted and talented youth](#) provides links to useful resources on educating gifted children.

[Curriculum Compacting: A Systematic Procedure for Modifying the Curriculum for Above Average Ability Students](#) explores curriculum compacting to support and meet the needs of gifted students

[15 tips for identifying Gifted EL students](#) provides guidance in identifying gifted and talented ELs and avoid underrepresentation.

[One to grow on/beyond grades and "gotchas"](#) provides recommendations for providing feedback to students.

[The secret of effective feedback](#) provides suggestions and tips for providing feedback to students.

[Formative Assessment as Contingent Teaching and Learning: Perspectives on Assessment as and for Language Learning in the Content Areas](#) explains contingent pedagogy as an effective approach for developing EL language and academic achievement and discusses the role formative assessment plays in contingent pedagogy.

[English learners Success forum](#) provides resources to support the assessment of ELs (see [Assessment of Student Writing and Oral Language Production\(ELA\)](#), [Assessment of Student Writing and Oral Language Production \(Math\)](#), [Formative assessment considerations \(ELA\)](#), and [Formative assessments considerations \(Math\)](#))

[Using Informal Assessment in the Classroom](#) provides a collection of articles, videos, and resources for informal assessments of ELs to monitor student learning and language development.

[Assessment Considerations for Young English Language Learners Across Different Levels of Accountability](#) explores assessment considerations for young ELs and presents recommendations for improvement.

[Teaching English language learners: what the research does — and does not — say](#) provides a summary of research and explores classroom considerations including effective assessment practices for ELs.

[Fair and Square Assessments for ELLs](#) presents strategies for fair and equitable assessment practices for ELs.

[Analysis of a PARCC ELA Assessment Task Through an ELL Lens \(Part 1\)](#) examines common core state standards-based assessments with an EL lens and provides a good framework educators can use to analyze summative, high-stakes assessments to help inform classroom instruction, assessment, and curriculum.

[Instructional Suggestions for ELLs: PARCC Assessment Task \(Part 2\)](#) explores effective strategies educators can use to help prepare students for high-stakes, summative assessments.

[Identifying Gifted and Talented English Language Learners](#) provides recommended practices for identifying gifted and talented ELs.